Improving Federal Drug-Related Data Systems

ONDCP supports improvements to enhance the policy relevance of federal drug-related data systems. The Data Subcommittee has supported the following innovations:

- The National Institute of Justice is expanding and revising the Drug Use Forecasting program into the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) system. Plans call for the expansion of ADAM to 75 sites with probability-based samples representative of the respective metropolitan areas. The new ADAM instrument includes questions to promote the estimation of the prevalence of drug abuse among arrestee populations comparable to those generated for the general household population. The first ten new ADAM sites were funded by ONDCP in 1998.

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) enlarged the sample for the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA)—reaching nearly quadruple the size—permitting, for the first time, estimation of drug-use prevalence at the state level. The first wave of new data became available in August 2000.

- The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) began implementation in FY 2002 of the National Treatment Outcome Monitoring System (NTOMS). NTOMS combines the work of two data systems funded by ONDCP: the Drug Evaluation Network System, which provides real-time data on treatment admission; and the Random Access Monitoring of Narcotics Addicts system, which estimates the size and characteristics of chronic drug-using populations. NTOMS will provide essential data on treatment effectiveness, waiting time, and chronic users.

- Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) has several activities to promote state data systems. For example, 20 states now voluntarily collect common process and capacity data using software developed under Minimum Data Set I (MDSI), which permits collection from the provider through the substate, state, and federal system levels. Similarly, states can voluntarily report on five common outcome measures in the pilot SAPT block grant application for FY 2000.

- SAMHSA's Office of Applied Studies (OAS) is undertaking a redesign of the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) system, in efforts to maintain alignment with the health care delivery system. DAWN is an important source of national and local data on substance abuse derived from information on visits to hospital emergency departments (EDs) and drug-related deaths identified by medical examiners (MEs). DAWN collects data on the demographic characteristics of substance abusers and the specific drugs involved in each drug-related ED visit or death. The new design will begin initial phase-in in 2003 with the following:

    1) expanding the sample of emergency departments to include 45 metropolitan areas,

    2) establishing a sentinel hospital system for early reporting,

3) changing the criteria for identifying
   a DAWN case, and

4) converting from paper to electronic forms.

- ONDCP and the Department of Justice
  are leading an interagency effort to develop
  drug availability models—from source
  countries through availability in the United
  States—for cocaine, heroin, marijuana,
  and methamphetamine. Results from this
  project are providing critical measures
  enabling assessment of the Nation's supply-
  reduction programs.